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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Mr. Chairman, Senator Warner, and members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today. I have looked forward to this session as an opportunity to highlight the extraordinary achievements of the 71,000 U.S. and Coalition troops I am privileged to command. The servicemen and women of Central Command and the Coalition are carrying the fight to the enemy. Their record of courage, tenacity, and professionalism inspires me every day, and is a source of great pride for the American people.

I would like to begin by recognizing the Coalition nations whose contributions of forces, equipment, and economic support to the Central Region signal worldwide determination to eradicate terrorism. And of course, our success to date would not have been possible without the determination and will of the Afghan people who are beginning to experience the blessings of democracy and freedom.

When I last appeared before the Committee on February 7th, 2002, I told you our successes to date represented the first steps in what would be a long campaign to defeat terrorism. Our focus was on removing the Taliban from power and destroying the al-Qaeda network within Afghanistan. Now that the Taliban has been destroyed, we continue to locate and engage remaining pockets of terrorists and their supporters to improve the security and stability of the emerging Afghan nation.

Over the past six months, the Coalition has grown steadily from 50 nations in February to 70 today; 37 Coalition nations are represented at our headquarters in Tampa and in the Central Region, and 15 nations have forces in Afghanistan.

Operational success to this point is directly attributable to the will of our country and each Coalition member - a will which I believe has been grossly underestimated by the terrorist organizations which threaten us. The Taliban has been removed from power. Al-Qaeda senior leadership is in disarray. Many of their planners, travel facilitators, and logisticians are now dead or captured. Their training facilities in Afghanistan have been destroyed, command and control capabilities have been disrupted, and their remaining leaders are on the run. However, al-Qaeda has not lost its will to conceive, plan and execute terrorist operations world-wide. It is the relentless pressure of military, financial, and diplomatic efforts over the last 10 months that have prevented the al-Qaeda from sustaining its pre-9/11 capacity.

Our Coalition partners will remain key to our operations. Their contributions have included ground, air, naval, and special operations forces, logistics support, humanitarian assistance, and basing. We are continuing to cycle these forces in and out as Coalition countries remain committed to our efforts. For example, a Romanian infantry battalion recently replaced the Canadian light infantry and began combat operations a little over a week ago.

Since February, US and Coalition air forces have flown more than 36,000 sorties in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Twenty-one thousand of these sorties were flown over Afghanistan with more than 6,000 being strike sorties. Coalition air forces have provided fighter and attack aircraft to support ground operations, tanker and surveillance aircraft, and vital inter- and intra-theater airlift.

Neighboring countries, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, have provided critical basing for Coalition aircraft. Uzbekistan continues to facilitate the safe flow of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people across the Friendship Bridge, while Kyrgyzstan hosts a Coalition air hub and supports the use of its road and rail infrastructure for humanitarian assistance shipments into Afghanistan. This is testament to the relationships and military-to-military contacts we have built over the years, but more so a testament to the will of these countries to eradicate terrorism.

It doesn't end there. Naval forces from the United States and 11 Coalition countries continue to support ground operations and conduct leadership interdiction operations -- we have queried more than 16,000 vessels and boarded approximately 200 since November 2001. France alone has deployed fully one-quarter of its fleet in direct support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Terrorists cannot hide. We will find them regardless of the methods or environments they use to spread and support their networks. We continue to use every legal means to eliminate their operations.

Other examples of invaluable Coalition contributions include Norway providing 21 hardened vehicles valued at \$2.1 million for our special operations forces; the Czech Republic deploying a consequence management team to Kuwait, and Spain sending helicopters to Kyrgyzstan. Germany is leading the training of Afghan police forces and Italy is engaged in rebuilding the judiciary.

Coalition forces have also provided equipment and personnel to clear mines in Afghanistan. British, Jordanian, Norwegian, and Polish

engineers have accomplished the dangerous work of methodically clearing in excess of 1.7 million square meters of terrain. And, among the many countries that stand with us, Pakistan deserves special mention because its cooperation and support have been critical to our success. US and Coalition aircraft have been granted use of Pakistani airspace and authority for the movement of logistics by sea and land routes. Pakistan Army operations in the Northwest Frontier Provinces, in coordination with Coalition operations along the Afghan border, have maintained the pressure on al-Qaeda. These operations have not been without cost to the people of Pakistan. While the Pakistan Army has killed and captured hundreds of former Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, they have had a number of their own troops killed by terrorist forces. Pakistan and its leadership continue to evidence exceptional resolve.

Two recent examples of successful combined operations, resulting in the detention of four suspected al-Qaeda members, exemplify the success of forces acting together. On July 13th and 17th, as the result of intercepts received by navy vessels and aircraft from Canada, France, Italy and the Netherlands, two boats were targeted, intercepted, and boarded in the Gulf of Oman. On each boat, two men matching descriptions contained in our terrorist database were captured and transported to our detainee facility in Bagram.

In the month of March, US, Coalition, and Afghan military forces conducted the largest combat operation in Afghanistan to date -- Operation ANACONDA. It resulted in the elimination of the Shahi-Khot and Chumarra Valleys as sanctuaries for concentrations of al-Qaeda and

Taliban. ANACONDA was a major success; a significant enemy pocket was destroyed, and notice was served to terrorists that there would be no safe harbor in Afghanistan.

United States and Coalition conventional and special operations forces are currently conducting Operation MOUNTAIN LION. More than 300 weapon and ammunition caches have been located and destroyed since 1 January 2002. And, an exceptionally encouraging trend is that 159 of these caches were identified to coalition forces by local Afghans in just the past 60 days. Our operations demonstrate to terrorists and terrorist sympathizers that they have nowhere to hide. We will continue Operation Mountain Lion to root-out remaining terrorists as so long as it takes.

As we led up to the June Loya Jirga, the XVIII Airborne Corps was designated Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180) and was deployed to Afghanistan. This task force gives us a single joint command responsible for military functions in the country, and establishes full-time, senior command presence forward on the ground. Through routine and frequent contact, the commander has developed close professional relationships with Afghan military and political leaders and senior members of the Afghan Transitional Authority.

We are now also training the Afghan National Army and Border Security Forces. On July 23rd, the first US-trained, multi-ethnic Afghan battalion stood proudly on the graduation parade field flanked on either side by two more battalions currently in training, one being trained by our French Partners. For the first time in decades, we see

the beginnings of a professional, representative military force ready to serve the people of Afghanistan.

While this in itself represents a remarkable achievement, building the Afghan National Army will require a long-term commitment, focusing on the establishment of the Central Kabul Corps over the next two years. In concert with the central government, we are developing a master plan to map the way ahead for a trained, supportable national army, responsive to the central government and capable of securing Afghan borders and stabilizing the interior.

Another vital factor contributing to the stability of Afghanistan is the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul. This force, initially led by the United Kingdom, and now by Turkey, served as guarantor of an environment in which the Loya Jirga was safely conducted. This historic event occurred without significant incident, and on June 19th, the first "election" in Afghanistan since 1963 was concluded. The contributions of ISAF have been, and will continue to be, important to the Afghan people during the current period of transition.

Choosing Hamid Karzai as President and confirming his selection of cabinet ministers, the Loya Jirga was comprised of women, nomads, internally displaced persons, refugees, Islamic clerics, professionals, and all major ethnic and tribal groups. Selecting the transitional government, however, was only a first step. Afghanistan will require continuing robust international assistance to build an enhanced security environment in which the Afghan government can mature.

With the establishment of the most secure environment Afghanistan has experienced in more than 20 years, we are now able to effectively conduct civil-military operations and provide humanitarian assistance across most of the country. Since March, our Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF) has deployed teams throughout Afghanistan and has coordinated with literally hundreds of governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to deliver humanitarian materials, help revive the education system, repair agricultural infrastructure, and provide potable drinking water. We have identified 89 humanitarian projects, including reconstruction of 49 schools, 15 medical facilities, and 12 drinking-water wells. To date, 43 of these projects have been completed at a cost of \$4.5 million dollars. Many of these efforts have helped facilitate the return of 614,000 Internally Displaced Persons and 1.3 million refugees to their homes. As Secretary Rumsfeld has said on numerous occasions, "people vote with their feet." While the return of so many Afghans to their homes will certainly stress existing infrastructure, it represents the desire of the people to reclaim their heritage and build for the future. And the Coalition continues to help. Jordanian, Korean and Spanish field hospitals have treated more than 100,000 Afghan civilians, the majority of whom have been women and children. Such efforts give the Afghan people hope, and help provide an environment in which that hope can flourish.

We intend to capitalize upon achievements to date. Focusing our efforts on completing the eradication of terrorist groups is the key to preventing their return. And, the key to eradication of the enemy

is the exploitation of captured persons and documents in Afghanistan, at Guantanamo Bay, and within the US. To date, such efforts have led to the arrests of individuals in Algeria, Indonesia, Jordan, Pakistan, Kenya, France, Singapore, Somalia, and the United Kingdom. Intelligence derived from these arrests has been useful in preventing terrorist operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, France, Turkey, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia.

The scale of our Human Intelligence effort has been extraordinary. Let me cite a few examples.

- US and Coalition forces have screened more than 7,500 detainees in Afghanistan.
- More than 3,500 interrogations have been conducted on 2,200 individuals.
- These interrogations have led to the detention at Guantanamo Bay of 500-plus terrorists from 44 different countries.
- 16,000 documents have been screened and 12,000 added to a database.
- Recruitment methods for al-Qaeda have been documented.
- Suspected al-Qaeda members have been positively identified.
- Weapons caches throughout Afghanistan have been located.
- Plots to blow up US air bases in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, and the US Embassy in Yemen have been disrupted.
- Methods of al-Qaeda financing have been detected.

While we remain optimistic given Coalition successes, the Afghanistan battlefield remains dangerous and complex. In some areas, small numbers of remaining enemy have blended in with sympathetic

segments of the civilian population. Tribal, ethnic and cultural conflicts, driven in some cases by traditional rivalries, lead to factional clashes, and these incidents threaten stability and present challenges to Coalition forces. Distinguishing between friend and foe remains a difficult task. We will continue to refine our tactics, techniques, and procedures to address the Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) problem.

As in past wars, combat operations are imperfect, even in this age of technology and precision. Distinguishing between friend and foe is but one example of this fact. War entails risk to friendly forces and civilians who are located in or near an area of conflict. During Operation Enduring Freedom, we have taken extensive measures in an effort to ensure the accuracy and precision of our fires. Nevertheless, we have seen military and civilian casualties. We have investigated a number of reports of "friendly fire." In each case, commanders at every level have worked to determine the facts, locations, and sequence of the events associated with the report. And, when casualties are found to have occurred, we have applied lessons learned to improve our techniques and procedures. When civilians have been killed or injured, we have worked with local leaders to express regret for the loss of life, and to inform them about our mission. The incident near Deh Rawod on the first of July provides an example of our approach to reports of civilian casualties. We know civilians were killed and injured in this operation based upon preliminary inquiry conducted immediately following the incident. We also know that aircraft in the area reported ground fire during the operation.

Based upon these facts, an investigation was initiated on 14 July, and is ongoing to build a more complete understanding of the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident. When that investigation is complete, we will apply any lessons learned. In the meantime, a Coalition team has been positioned in Deh Rawod in coordination with local government officials. This team provides an opportunity to increase local understanding of our operations and enhance the willingness of NGOs to begin work in the area.

In my testimony in February, I described several emerging observations that give us insight to ongoing and future military operations. Following, are several of the more important of these observations:

- Strategic airlift remains key current and future military operations. We are on a glidepath to expand our strategic airlift capabilities, and must remain committed to the task.

- The use of Precision Guided Munitions continues to be a key force multiplier, increasing the likelihood of successful target engagement, reducing the number of aircraft sorties required to destroy a target, limiting collateral damage, and enabling the commander on the ground to more effectively engage targets. Forces in Afghanistan have expended more than 12,000 PGMs, approximately 50% of the total munitions expended. The committee's continuing support of these programs is appreciated.

- Anti-personnel and anti-tank mines continue to pose a significant threat to US and Coalition forces and the Afghan people, and must be cleared. We estimate that more than 3 million mines are

spread throughout Afghanistan. Service efforts to improve our mine clearing capability remain important to current and future readiness.

- An area in which modern warfare has forever been transformed is that of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR). Platforms such as Predator and Global Hawk have provided real-time intelligence, enhanced situational awareness, and facilitated command and control at all levels. These assets have proven the value of unmanned aerial systems and we must continue to build upon this growing capability.

In closing, I want to make clear that our work in Afghanistan is not finished. While US and Coalition forces have accomplished much over the past ten months, the potential for terrorist acts and setbacks remains very real. Afghanistan is rising from the oppression of the Taliban into an independent, democratic nation. I am optimistic about the future, but much work remains to be done.

September 11th changed America forever. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon united us and our Coalition partners in a mission to eliminate global terrorism. Central Command remains committed to that mission.

I am very proud of each and every one of the men and women who continue to serve selflessly and tirelessly in the execution of our mission regardless of the uniform of service they wear or the nation from which they come. I thank the Congress and the American people for the tremendous support you have given them.